SYSTEM / VICTIM FOCUS

Overview

- Victim focus
- Process for blaming the victim
- Factors that promote victim focus
- System focus
- Methods to prevent victim focus

Victim Focus

- Reactive problem solving
- Sees the victim as the cause
- Focuses on “Fixing” the victim
- Narrow approach to problem solving

Steps in Blaming the Victim

- Identify a social problem
- Study those affected & how they are differences
- Define differences as the cause
- Implement actions to correct differences

Social Factors that Promote Victim Focus

- Unequal status
- Distortions of reality
- Acceptance of victimization

System Focus Approach

- Proactive problem-solving
- Identifies the problem as being part of, or caused by the System
- Improve the system to prevent future problems

Why System Focus not Commonly Used

- Not a quick fix
- Victim desires conformity
- Self perpetuating process

Methods to Prevent Victim Focus

- **Dialogue**
- **Assessment & feedback**

Summary

- Victim focus
- Process for blaming the victim
- Factors that promote victim focus
- System focus
- Methods to prevent victim focus

SYSTEM / VICTIM FOCUS

Practical Application

The Drawbridge Exercise

As he left for a visit to his outlying districts, the jealous Baron warned his pretty wife: "Do not leave the castle while I am gone, or I'll punish you severely when I return." But, as the hours passed, the young Baroness grew bored, lonely and fed-up with her situation. Despite her husband's warning, she decided to visit her lover who lived in the countryside nearby. The castle was located on an island in a wide, fast-flowing river, with a drawbridge linking the island to land at the narrowest point in the river. "Surely my husband will not return before dawn," she thought, and ordered her servants to lower the drawbridge and leave it down until she returned. After spending several pleasant hours visiting with her lover, the Baroness returned to the drawbridge, only to find it blocked by a madman wildly waving a long and cruel knife. "Do not attempt to cross this bridge, Baroness, or I'll kill you," he raved. Fearing for her life, the Baroness returned to her lover and asked for help. The lover said, "I would really like to help, but I can't." The Baroness then sought out a boatman on the river, explained her situation to him, and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. "I will do it only if you pay me my fee of five marks." "But I have no money with me," the Baroness protested. "That's too bad, no money, no ride," the boatman said flatly. Her fear growing, the Baroness ran crying to the home of a friend. After explaining her situation, she begged for enough money to pay the boatman his fee. "If you had not disobeyed your husband, this would not have happened," said the friend. "I will give you no money." With dawn approaching and her last resource exhausted, the Baroness returned to the bridge. In desperation, she attempted to cross the drawbridge to the castle, and was slain by the madman.

The Drawbridge Exercise

Question: Who is most responsible for the death of the Baroness?

(1) – The person most responsible

(6) - The person least responsible.